

1. Revelation: Preview of the Revelation

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Introduction:

Today we are going to start a study of the book of Revelation. The Lord has laid this on my heart for our church. Do you realise that the Bible is a book that contains hundreds of specific prophecies that have been fulfilled in specific ways, all with 100% accuracy? All this is undeniable proof that the Bible is truly the Word of God. Therefore, it is good that we take the time to look more closely at Bible prophecy and more specifically, Revelation, considering that we are living in the last days. Now, sadly, I know for a fact that not too many churches are engaged in preaching from Revelation... because it relates to Bible prophecy. You see, many pastors are more interested in growing their church in numbers and they do this by preaching 'how to be successful' sermons than teach about Bible prophecy. But let me encourage you with these words in **chapter 1:3: "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near." God promises a blessing to all those that read this book!**

I honestly believe that because Revelation is not preached from much these days, for this reason many Christians are no longer passionate about the return of Jesus, they are lacking in faithful obedience, they are often prayerless, and are less interested in studying Scripture! But my prayer for us is that we develop a passion to see Christ's return which in turn would create a passion to see lost souls saved from an eternity in hell! And yes... I do pray that this book would cause all of us to become uncomfortable!

Now, I know that there are many good and godly Christians who have different interpretations of this book and that's fine. The main thing is that Christ is coming back again. However, I believe there is a reasonable and logical way to understand and interpret this book... and there is a long line of well-respected Bible teachers and commentators who understand and interpret this book in a particular way, and that is how I will be sharing it with you.

The parallel between Genesis and Revelation

The word of God, the Bible, is a total complete unit. It is not 66 disjointed books. There is a marvellous unity to the word of God that begins with the book of Genesis and ends with the book of Revelation. Even though they were written thousands of years apart, Genesis and Revelation are sister books. For instance, in Genesis we read about the creation of the first heaven and the first earth. The Bible says, **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."** In Revelation, the first heaven and the first earth pass away and we read about the creation of the new heaven and the new earth. That's the parallel.

In Genesis we read about Paradise being lost. Adam and Eve were created in a perfect environment and because of their rebellion and their choice to sin; they lost that state of paradise. There are a lot of humanists today in our land that would tell you if we could just create a perfect environment for men and women to live in, man would overcome all his sin. But that is wrong! Because in a perfect environment man sinned. So Genesis teaches paradise lost. Revelation, on the other hand, teaches paradise restored, because as we're going to see today, the last part of the book of Revelation pictures a time in the future when paradise will be restored to those who know and love God.

In Genesis, man is driven from the Tree of Life because of sin. Adam and Eve are driven out of the Garden of Eden and God even stations cherubim there to guard the entrance to it. In Revelation it is just the opposite. Man is invited back to the Tree of Life. **"Come, drink from the river of life. Come and eat from the tree of life."**

Satan makes his entrance in Genesis. He comes on the scene for the first time and in Revelation we learn about Satan's exit. I like that the Bible doesn't have a devil in the first two chapters and doesn't have a devil in the last two chapters. He's dealt with and he's done away with. In the book of Genesis, by the way, Satan's doom is pronounced. In the book of Revelation, Satan's doom is executed—it is fulfilled!

In Genesis we read about the first tears. They occurred because of sin. God put the curse upon man and said, *"You're going to have to earn your money and earn your food by the toil and sweat of your brow. You'll be heartbroken. There will be sorrow in childbearing. There are going to be tears."* And all throughout the history of mankind it is a trail of tears. Tears were introduced in the book of Genesis but in the book of Revelation we read about the last tears because the Bible says, *"God shall wipe all tears from their eyes."* Isn't that a great promise? Won't you be excited to live in a place where there won't be any crying, where there won't be any tears and no more sorrow?

In Genesis we read about the first death. God says, *"You can eat of any tree in the Garden but the day you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall surely die!"* And they did die spiritually. Then, Cain and Abel were involved in the first murder, the first death. But we are told in Revelation there will be no more death.

In Genesis we read about the first Adam and his wife Eve. It was the first Adam who got us in trouble but in Revelation the focus is the second Adam, who the Bible says Jesus Christ is the second Adam, and his wife—the church—the bride of Christ. So what the first Adam messed up, Jesus Christ fixed up. You could say the history of mankind is a history of being formed, then being dis-formed by sin, and then being transformed by Jesus Christ.

That's kind of a parallel between Genesis and Revelation. By the way, Genesis and Revelation are the two most attacked books of the Bible. There are a lot of people who will tell you the book of Genesis is nothing but a myth and that's why some teachers laugh if their students try to say, *"I believe the heavens and the earth came into existence because God created them."* On the other hand, some try to tell you the book of Revelation is mystery and cannot be understood. One is a myth and the other is a mystery. One you can't believe and the other is so complicated you can't understand it. Both of those are wrong! *I'm here to show you that you can easily understand the book of Revelation.*
Revelation 1:1: "The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant, John who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it because the time is near."

Now, today will only be a brief overview of this book. This message is called **'Preview to the Revelation'**. I want to take those verses apart and the first thing I want you to notice is the title of the book; it is *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ"*. I can't stand it when people call it "Revelations" – plural. That just shows that they hardly know anything about the book. What does "revelation" mean? The word, revelation, is the word, apokalupsis, where we get our word, "apocalypse." It's a word that means, *to unveil, to unwrap*. *Illustration: Imagine a sculpture creating a beautiful statue for the front of some public building and they covered the area where he was working with a large tarp. The artist works inside for months making the sculpture and nobody could see it. It was totally covered off. He finishes his work and finally the time comes for the unveiling of that statue. The crowd is gathered and the band is playing. The statue is still covered up. At the given sign, someone pulls a rope and the sheet covering falls off the statue and it is apokalupsis it is revealed and everyone can see what it looks like. That's what that word, revelation means. It's the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

**Now, listen very carefully: if you read Revelation because you just want to know what's going to happen in the future, you won't be much rewarded. Because that is NOT the purpose of the book. *Its purpose is to reveal Jesus Christ to you! That's the whole point of the book.*

Every book in the Bible is about Jesus but this book specifically says, “to reveal Jesus Christ, to unveil Jesus Christ” to you. If you stick with me during this series, if you come along regularly to listen to this teaching, you’re going to know more about Jesus Christ than you ever knew before. He’ll be unveiled for you.

****Keep reading. “It’s the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants.”** That’s the second thing. This book is given to the servants of Jesus Christ. It’s not given to anyone else. There are fortune tellers and some who call themselves modern prophets who try to predict the future. They try to study the book of Revelation to find out what’s going to happen in the future and they don’t understand it. Why? It’s not written to them; they’re reading somebody else’s mail. This book was addressed to the servants of Jesus Christ. That means you have to have a servant’s heart and attitude to understand it.

Illustration: There’s a movie called “The Omen”. Hollywood attempted to try to take the book of Revelation and make it become real. It focused on a boy who grew up to be the Antichrist and they had somebody opening a Bible, and reading something that supposedly was in Revelation and it rhymed in English! But do you get it? Hollywood was trying to take it and base a movie on it. They tried, but they missed it a hundred miles because the book wasn’t written to Hollywood, and it wasn’t written to somebody who just wants to figure out the future—it was written to the servants of Jesus, and if you don’t have a servant’s attitude, you won’t understand it.

****Next it says “to show his servants what must soon take place.”** You say, “Wait a minute. When was this book written?” About 90 A.D. “It’s almost 2,000 years later and it hasn’t happened yet why does the Bible say it will soon take place?” That word which translates to will soon take place literally means that when it begins, it will occur with great rapidity! When the cycle is set in motion, it will all take place rapidly and quickly. Things are coming to a head. We may not know it, but they are. *Illustration: Have you ever rewound a VHS video cassette? At the beginning the film rewinding goes rather slow, but as it gets toward the end, it goes faster and faster and faster and faster and faster until finally the end of that film just whips out!* That’s what that word literally means—things are going to be put into motion, and once they get put into motion it will all happen quickly.

I believe with all my heart that we are living in a time when these things are going to be put into motion. Why? Because Revelation says a lot about the nation of Israel... and a hundred years ago there was no nation of Israel. Most of you know in 70 A.D. the nation of Israel as we know it was wiped off the face of the earth by the Romans and did not become a nation again until 1948! And because there is an Israel today, that is the key event that has triggered many things into motion. So when the Bible says it will shortly take place, it means when it starts, it’s going to happen quickly.

****“He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John.”** The word ‘signify’ here means using signs and symbols. In order to understand the book of Revelation you have to know there are a lot of symbols in here. Now, some people say, “You can’t take the Bible literally! You have to take the Bible symbolically!” There’s a word for that—**baloney!** It is a ridiculous statement. The symbolic parts of the Bible—take them symbolically. But look for the literal truth behind the symbols. The literal parts of the Bible take them literally but these people who say, “You can’t take the Bible literally!” haven’t studied the Bible very clearly.

An example of a symbol is in Revelation 12:3, which talks about an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. What is that? That sounds like something you would dream after eating 3 day old pizza! Is there such a real red dragon like that? No... that is obviously a symbol because further down in that chapter it explains the symbol and says that it is the devil, or Satan who leads the whole world astray, and he was hurled to the earth, and an his angels with him. Some people say, “Satan isn’t real. He’s just symbolic in the Bible.” No, no. Satan is real! The dragon is a symbol – the reality is Satan, himself. So it is important to understand to understand what these symbols represent, because if you don’t, it will make very little sense to you.

Remember what it said back in **Revelation 1:1?** *“He sent his angel to his servant, John.”* Which John are we talking about? We are talking about the John who was the disciple of Jesus, one of the twelve disciples. Tradition says he was the youngest of the disciples, perhaps the closest friend to Jesus, because he’s often referred to in his own gospel account as *“the one whom Jesus loved.”* He’s the one who laid up against the chest of Jesus at the Last Supper and asked him who would be the one who would betray him. Tradition tells us all of the disciples died a martyr’s death except for the apostle, John, who was persecuted under the Roman emperor, Domitian. Tradition says John was to be publicly executed by boiling in oil. Tradition says they threw the aged apostle in a vat of boiling oil, but he didn’t die. He was terribly burned and terribly disfigured but he didn’t die. There was a law that said if you were unsuccessful in executing someone, you couldn’t try again. So instead of re-executing him, he was exiled to the little island of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea, where he died of natural causes. While John was on the Island of Patmos, living in recluse, almost like a hermit, God gave him this vision of the Revelation.

I. WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN (the past)

It says in verse 2 he is testifying to everything he saw. John saw everything in this book. What did he see? He saw the *“word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”* In order to understand the book you have to understand the “key verse.” The key to understanding the whole book of Revelation is **1:19**; it explains why John divided the book into three parts. Understand that John is writing down what he saw and this is what Jesus says to him: *“Write, therefore, what you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.”* The King James says *“hereafter.”*

When Jesus appears to the apostle John he says, *“There are three things I want you to write down, John. I want you to write down what you have just seen.”* That’s the first part. What is that? The vision of Jesus Christ. We’re going to be studying this in the next few weeks. John is there worshiping the Lord on the Lord’s Day, on a Sunday, and suddenly he hears a voice behind him and he turns around and he sees Jesus! Chapter 1 of Revelation is the only physical description of the appearance of Jesus in the Bible of what he looks like now. You may be surprised but John sees Him and he falls at His feet like a dead man. Jesus touches him and picks him up. Then He gives him this message. He says several things to him. *“John, this is what I want you to write down. I want you to write down what you have just seen—the vision—I want you to describe me to all the people out there who will read this book.”*

When you see Jesus Christ with the eyes of faith how does He appear to you? Do you still picture Jesus, like He is pictured in the Jesus films? Long hair, beard, blue eyes, fair skin? Do you think when you first see Jesus when He comes to rapture the church, He’s going to look like that still? I think you are in for a surprise because what we are going to see will be a glorified Jesus Christ. He’s going to look different than most of us imagine. John saw Him and he was so awed by his power and majesty, he fell down like a dead man. But that’s the first part and it’s just a brief part of the book *“write the things that you have seen.”* That’s past. *“What did you just see, John? Write it down!”* That’s the shortest part of the threefold division of the book. It just covers chapter 1:1-20.

II. WHAT IS NOW: THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The second part, which is key to the book, is “Write what is now.” Look at **verse 19** again *“Write the things which you have seen,”* that’s the past. Then *“and the things which are”* – the present. That’s the seven churches at the beginning of chapter 2. In chapters 2 and 3, there is a letter to the seven churches: *Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.* They were actual churches during the time John wrote this. But I understand that because of the character of this prophecy, these also represent churches

today and Christians in churches today and all churches of all times. Why? Because of the number seven. You have to understand the Jews had a practice of assigning meaning to most numbers... which is called, 'Gematria'. Seven means a number of perfection, or completion, or a whole unit. For example, when Revelation talks about the seven spirits of God, it does not mean that there are seven Holy Spirits, but rather the 'seven-fold' Spirit spoken of by Isaiah in 11:2 who is the picture of the unity and perfection of the Spirit of God.

I understand these seven churches represent all the churches of all times through the ages. There is a belief called "dispensationalism." Maybe you have heard it takes a little different angle on all of this and they say these seven churches represent seven church ages periods of time. For instance, they would say, "*We are living in the age of the Laodicean church.*" I personally don't believe that teaching. I believe today you can find some Laodicean Christians who are lukewarm. I believe you can find some Ephesian Christians today who have lost their first passionate love for Jesus. I believe you can find some Philadelphian Christians today who have an open door of opportunity before them that no-one can shut and they persevere through the persecution. And those are powerful messages to hear. People often will often say they like to hear preaching from Revelation but they don't like to hear messages about the seven churches... do you know why? Because it's preaching to them. And they don't like to hear a preacher meddling and start talking about dead Christians and lukewarm Christians that make God sick. People like to hear all about the future stuff but just don't preach at me! Well, that's what the second part of the book is all about. The seven churches are "things that are right now!"... and I mean 'today'.

III. WHAT WILL TAKE PLACE LATER

The third part of the book is "what will take place later" and that is the main portion of the book, beginning with chapter 4:1 all the way through the end of the book. It's talking about the future things that have not happened yet today, but will happen in the future. In *Revelation 4:1*, John says, "*After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'*" This is in the same words in Greek as the ones found in *1:19*, "*the things which will take place after this.*" It is the picture of what will happen next that will set God's prophetic clock back into action. There is a series of events that will take place in the last portion of the book of Revelation. I understand this to be all in the future. Let me give you five of them quickly:

1. The rapture

The rapture of the church, when Christians are taken out of this world. That's what John says in *chapter 1:10*, "*I heard a sound like a trumpet*" does that sound familiar to you? "*Behold, I'll tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*" (*1 Cor. 15:51-52*). "*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we will always be with the Lord*" (*1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*). There are some people who believe Christians are going to be on earth during the time of the Tribulation. I don't believe that, because I understand in chapter 4:1 we're taken out of this place. In the first three chapters in Revelation you find "*the church, the church, the church.*" Then in chapter 4:1—whoosh! We're out of here! Revelation never mentions the church again.

Most of you know that the word 'rapture' doesn't appear in English in the Bible, but rather it is the Greek word *harpadzo* found in *1 Thessalonians 4:16* when it says, "*we shall be caught up together.*" It comes from the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible which is the word *raptio*. That's where we get our word "rapture." That's the next thing that's going to happen on God's prophetic calendar. At any moment, Jesus Christ could come in the clouds and the Christians could be caught up to be with him and that will set all these events into motion that we see beginning in chapter 4, verse 1.

2. The tribulation

Next will be the great Tribulation as Jesus called it (Matt. 24:21). There will be seven years of Tribulation. You say, "Where do you get "seven" years?" I will explain all of it when we get there but it is what is called "Daniel's seventieth week." In the Old Testament, Daniel prophesied there would be seventy weeks in which God would sum up and complete everything in his plan. Sixty-nine of those weeks have already happened but the 70th seven year period has not yet happened. It's like we are living right now between the 69th and the 70th week and when Jesus comes to rapture the church, the clock starts again and that last seven year period will take place. The first three and a half years of that seven-year period is not going to be too bad. In fact, it's almost going to be like a heaven on earth, almost like a Utopia, to begin with. But then the last three and a half years are going to be terrible where God's wrath will be poured out upon sinful mankind planet earth.

Chapter 9:6 says it's going to be a terrible time for the people who are alive here on the earth. *"During those days men will seek death, but they'll not find it; they'll long to die, but death will elude them."* People will want to commit suicide: God's not even going to let them do that! That's how terrible it is going to be. You would think because God keeps pouring out punishment, judgement, punishment, wrath, judgement, that they would fall on their knees and they would repent wouldn't you think that? No! *"Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts," (9:21).* The "magic arts" is the word pharmaceia meaning, "pharmacy drug abuse." *"They did not repent of their murders, their drug abuse, their sexual immorality or their thefts."* Doesn't that sound like our culture today? It's going to be even worse then!

And there is going to be this one person who comes on the scene in 13:5 whom we call the Antichrist. He's called "the beast." He's going to be the world leader during the time of Tribulation. *"The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months."* that's three and a half years. *"He opened his mouth to blaspheme God and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints,"* Those are the Tribulation saints, which we will get to... *"and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast— all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."* During the time of Tribulation, this charismatic man will come on the scene as a world leader and he's going to provide peace to the world. It never has been technologically possible for there to be one world leader until this generation. But it is possible now. We have the communication technology. We have the transportation technology. We were the first generation to watch a war in real time. It is technologically possible for one man to be the world leader. Every time you hear some leader start talking about the "New World Order" and "One World Monetary System," or "One World Economy," that may not be the Antichrist talking, but it's all building toward this idea of a one-world government led by one man—the Antichrist. (You can read more about it in Matthew 24).

3. The battle of Armageddon

The third thing that will take place is the Battle of Armageddon. At the end of that seven-year period, Jesus Christ is going to come back with the saints. At the rapture of the church, He comes back in the clouds and Christians are caught up to be with the Lord in the air. There's a seven year time of Tribulation on the earth when we're in heaven with him but at the Battle of Armageddon he will come back to planet earth. The Bible talks about that in 16:15. *Jesus says, "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed. Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon."* That's a common word today but what does Armageddon mean? Well, Megiddo is a place in central Israel. It means "the mountain of Megiddo." If you look at your Bible map sometime, that is nothing more than what's called "the plain of Jezreel." It is a beautiful, white valley area and the Bible says that's where the last battle is going to take place: at the mountain of Megiddo... Armageddon.

In chapter **19:11-13**, Jesus is going to come back with the saints. John describes the Second Coming of Jesus to earth. *“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True [Jesus] with justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. (Jesus)”* The armies of heaven were following him. That’s us! We’re there! Saddle up your horses. Let’s go! *“The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: “KING OF KING AND LORD OF LORDS”*

Some of you are saying, *“I want to go to heaven and sit in my little cabin there in the sky, but I don’t really want to fight in this battle. Know what I mean?”* Don’t worry about it. It’s going to be a much shorter battle than even the Gulf war. You won’t even have a weapon; you won’t need a weapon! There will only be one weapon used and that’s the Word of God. He’ll speak it! And one word will defeat all of those armies, nuclear arsenals, chemical warfare, space technology one word. Believe me. The Word of God is sharper and quicker than a two-edged sword. All Jesus will have to do is to speak... just speak! One word shall fell the devil! Knock him down! And it’s the word that Jesus will speak at His Second Coming at the Battle of Armageddon that will defeat Satan.

4. The millennium

What happens after? The Millennium means “thousand years.” John says, *“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (20:4)* Three times in that passage he talks about reigning with Christ one thousand years. The Bible teaches that when Jesus comes back at the Battle of Armageddon he is going to set up an earthly kingdom for a thousand years and we will reign with him. People say, “That is weird to me!” It is a great message of the word of God. It talks about the time when the lion will lie down with the lamb when men will beat their swords into trimming shears and all that that time of perfect peace and prosperity when all the nations will come before Jesus. We sing about it! *“And the government shall be upon his shoulders” (Isa. 9:6)*. Has that ever happened yet? Not yet, but it will! Jesus Christ is going to set up his literal kingdom on earth for a thousand years.

That’s where these different millennium words come in. Some people say, *“I am postmillennial”* which means they are saying, *“I believe there will be a thousand years of peace and prosperity on the earth and after that thousand years Jesus is going to come.”* There are some Christians who believe that. Some very prominent TV personalities hold to this view. That by our own efforts, we can bring in the Kingdom of God and after a thousand years of perfection on the earth, then Jesus will come. That’s post-millennial. Some people are what’s called *“a-millennial”* which means *“no millennium.”* They just say all of this is just symbolic, spiritual. It’s not really going to happen. Then there are those who believe as I do, that Jesus is going to come to earth before the millennium we’re what’s called *“pre-millennial.”* I believe Jesus is going to come back before His thousand year reign on the earth. Some people just say, *“I’m promillennial. I’m just for it!”* I’m for it too. Somebody else says, *“I’m pan-millennial. It will just all pan out in the end.”* That’s true but I honestly believe there’s going to be a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth and when we get to that point, I will describe it to you from the prophecy of Isaiah, and it will make sense.

5. Paradise for eternity

The final thing, of course, is paradise for all eternity. You can read about that in chapter 21 and chapter 22. *“He [Jesus] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away” (21:4).* Don't you just long for that? Isn't there something in your heart that makes you homesick for heaven? It's going to happen! *“No longer will there be any curse.” (22:3)* Can anybody tell me what the last word in the Old Testament is? Curse. That's the story of the whole Old Testament: the curse brought on by sin. I'm so glad the last chapter of the Bible says there's going to be no more curse. *“The throne of God and of the land will be in the city and the servants will serve him. They will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun for the Lord God will give them light. They will reign forever and ever!” (22:4-5)*

CONCLUSION

We talk about the last words of Jesus. We think it was the last words on the cross. Those weren't his last words. We think about the Great Commission before he ascended into heaven as being his last words. Do you want to know what his last words were? Look at chapter 22:20, *“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’”* That's the last words Jesus left us. He's coming soon. I kind of like what John had to say. “AMEN. Come on, Lord Jesus!”

Let's pray.

GEMATRIA:

To the Jews, the number one was the number of “unity.” “Hear, O Israel. The Lord thy God, the Lord is one God.” Two to the Jews was the number of “witness.” A thing had to be established in the mouths of two witnesses or more for it to be true. In the book of Revelation we are going to be introduced to two witnesses. The number three in the Jewish scope of thinking was the “divine” number. That’s why God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Holy, Holy, Holy, the number of the Trinity. The number four was the number of our planet, the earth. That’s why we have winds that come from the four directions, the four points on the compass, the four corners of the earth. The number six was man’s number, because man was created on the sixth day. We’re going to see later in the book that the number six has meaning—666; three sixes, the number for man trying to be God (and the number three was the divine number). Seven is the number for “perfection” and man is not quite perfect. Man just measures up to a six! Do you remember a few years ago men used to look at girls and say, “She’s a ten!” I want to tell you there’s no such thing as a ten. The highest any person can get is a six. Six is the number of man. Seven, of course, is the number of perfection. It’s a number that means “completion” or “a unit.” That’s how the Bible speaks in the book of Revelation of the “seven spirits surrounding the throne of God.” That’s a picture of the unity and the perfection of the one spirit of God. That’s why when we come here to seven churches—it’s talking about a totality of church life.

There are seven sevens in the book of Revelation. (1) There are seven beatitudes, meaning seven statements which say, “Blessed is he...” (2) There are the seven churches. (3) We’re going to see the main part of the book of Revelation involves the opening of seven seals. Seals like wax seals on a scroll you open read. (4) Then the next seal leads into the blowing of seven trumpets. (5) Each trumpet announces something which leads into the pouring out of seven bowls or vials of wrath. (6) There are also seven prominent characters in the book of Revelation. (7) And there are seven new things God promises at the end. There are seven series of sevens in the book of Revelation. Don’t think that’s by accident. The Jewish mind was really into this idea of Gematria, the power of numbers.

The number ten, for instance, was the number of “completion” in the sense of “human completion.” That’s why they counted to see that a baby had ten fingers and ten toes as we do. It talks about the reign of Christ—a thousand years. 10x10x10. Twelve was the number of “governmental perfection,” that’s why there were twelve patriarchs, apostles and that’s why after Judah hanged himself, the apostles felt the compulsion and the need to go ahead and get a twelfth apostle. Why? They had to have that sense of administrative perfection.